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ABSTRACT

As a result of a 1989 survey finding that 64 percent of Canadians aged 55-69 experience some degree of trouble with everyday reading material, One Voice, the Canadian Seniors Network, conducted a conference that brought together seniors, researchers, literacy project leaders, education professionals, community agencies and policy makers to examine the senior literacy problem and its solutions. The conference participants shared research, experiences, and information and studied the problem of low literacy in older adults in three ways. First, they examined the sources of the problem--historical, political, and cultural--finding the literacy problems of older Canadians to be highly diverse and pervasive. Service providers were judged to be insufficiently supportive of older adults with low literacy skills. Second, conference participants shared their knowledge of some solutions for low literacy. Projects and programs included: well-established community adult literacy classes; personal visits to care centers to share stories and discuss current events; and stressing the important role of community libraries. The common ingredients for success were a friendly, informal, accessible location; peer tutors; and input from seniors. Third, conference participants recommended that seniors should take the lead in developing literacy education for older Canadians. (Recommendations, conference participants, and their credentials are listed in appendixes to the report.) (KC)

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Learning
— That's Life!

Conference Report and Recommendations

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A National Conference on Literacy and Older Canadians

One Voice
The Canadian Seniors Network

CE 062 100

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Learning — That's Life!

Conference Report and Recommendations

A National Conference on Literacy and Older Canadians

conducted by

One Voice

The Canadian Seniors Network

April, 1990

Learning — That's Life!

Conference Report and Recommendations

One Voice — The Canadian Seniors Network

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One Voice Mission Statement

One Voice, The Canadian Seniors Network, promotes the enhancement of the status and independence of older Canadians. **One Voice** advocates policies and programs to improve the well-being of Canadian seniors and encourages and enables their full and active participation in decisions affecting their lives. **One Voice** is a non-partisan, voluntary, not-for-profit organization providing leadership and working in partnership and consultation with others.

Adopted by the Board of Directors of
One Voice
13 October 1989

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One Voice is grateful to the many supporters and participants who made such a success of our conference on literacy and older adults, *Learning — That's Life!*

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In addition, many contributions helped to sponsor individual conference sessions, special events, the Gala International Literacy Year Banquet, the **One Voice** Benefit Auction, and the general functioning of the conference. These include:

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National Bank of Canada
New Brunswick Senior Citizens Federation
Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of Canada
Searle Canada Inc.
Sharp Electronics of Canada Ltd.
T&H Printers Ltd.
The Car Phone Centre

We are also grateful for the cooperation of our partners in mounting the conference: our travel agents, Travel CUTS (Ottawa); the host hotel, the Château Laurier; the Ottawa Congress Centre; and our official carrier, Air Canada.

No conference, however, can be expected to succeed without the active participation of planners and organizers, presenters and resource people. We enjoyed the expertise and the willing help of many groups in the planning and execution of *Learning — That's Life!*, including our many partner seniors organizations across the land; The Canadian Commission for Unesco; our new friends in Canada's literacy and education organizations; the **One Voice** Board of Directors; and the Conference Committee. Under Chair Claude Plouffe, the Committee consisted of Sister Gisèle Richard, Bert Cyr and Bernard Richard.

Special mention should be made of the contribution of Professors Hélène Dallaire and Stan Jones to the planning of the conference program. The conference report was prepared by Christine Mercer of Adhawk Communications and edited by Andrew Aitkens. Conference Coordinator Sylvie Deliencourt and the staff of **One Voice** were assisted by Marion Fuller.

The enthusiasm and commitment of the conference participants suggest that the results of this conference will be far reaching and practical. As we work towards a National Literacy Strategy for Older Canadians, **One Voice** is confident that the independence and quality of life of Canada's seniors will be supported and enhanced by the work of these individuals and their organizations. It is to them we owe our greatest thanks.

Foreword

When **One Voice** began its research into literacy and older adults, we had no idea that the problem was as serious as it is. The results of the Statistics Canada Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities show that an astonishing 64% of older Canadians experience some degree of trouble reading printed material.

I have always felt that we are all illiterate in some way or other, perhaps because we don't know how to run a computer or can't read street signs in Japan. But these figures suggest that most people of our generation have difficulty with everyday reading activities. In today's information society, seniors simply must be literate to cope.

There are serious implications to the realities of illiteracy among older people. At this conference, we heard time and again of the risks seniors face when they can't read medication labels or use a phone book to find a needed service. They face isolation and loss of independence. As a society, these are outcomes we neither want nor can afford.

Learning — That's Life! marked a significant turning point. Under the auspices of the federal government's National Literacy Secretariat, **One Voice** brought together groups that had not met each other — seniors and literacy specialists. Out of the meeting was born a new partnership and a new commitment to lifelong learning and the right to literacy. That commitment will become more tangible as we develop and then put into action a National Literacy Strategy for Older Canadians.

In the years to come, I believe that this partnership will enrich the lives of all Canadians. Seniors have so much to give, and are willing to share their experience and wisdom. Improving literacy for seniors will open a doorway through which the light of Canada's heritage can shine.

Jean Woodsworth
President

Executive Summary

When **One Voice**, the Canadian Seniors Network, first approached the question of literacy and older Canadians in 1988, a review of the literature was conducted to examine current information on the subject. The review showed that surprisingly little research had been devoted to the older segments of the population.

"We can argue for the right of seniors to literacy, in part because we know that the principal reason is lack of opportunity for education."

Stan Jones, Ottawa, ON

Figures from the Southam Literacy Survey (1987), however, indicated that literacy levels among Canadian seniors were significantly lower than the rest of the population. **One Voice** studied the implications of this fact in 1988 during its exploratory "Leading to Read" consultation and established important links between seniors' literacy and their independence, health and safety, access to services, quality of life and individual and collective empowerment.

On the occasion of International Literacy Year (1990), **One Voice** collaborated with the National Literacy Secretariat of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada to further examine the particular issues of older adult illiteracy. As part of its activities, **One Voice** convened a national conference of seniors, researchers, literacy project leaders, education professionals, community agencies and policy makers in Ottawa in April 1990 to examine the problem and its solutions. The recommendations emerging from the Conference will assist **One Voice** in developing its National Literacy Strategy for Older Canadians.

The conference participants shared research, experiences and information. They studied the problem of low literacy in older adults in three ways:
FIRST, they examined the sources of the problem: historical, political and cultural. They viewed the problem of illiteracy in the Canadian context and in comparison to other countries. They considered the variables of geography, ethnicity, and minority language status.

In these matters, they found the literacy problems of older Canadians to be highly diverse and pervasive. More than half the Canadians aged 65 years and over have some difficulty reading and writing. Frequently, low literacy prevents seniors from taking an active role in the social and political life of their community and their country. In fact, without the ability to read or write, seniors are prevented from taking full control of their own lives.

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*"It is our responsibility to lead the way . . . this conference is the first step in acting on the recommendations of the **One Voice** report, the first step in addressing the problem of literacy and older adults. But we must act ... and we must act swiftly and effectively."*

Gilles Morin, Ontario Minister for Senior Citizens

Service providers were judged to be insufficiently supportive of older adults with low literacy skills. It was felt that many opportunities existed for health care professionals, community workers, the commercial service sector and others to give more consideration to low literacy when dealing with seniors.

SECOND, conference participants shared their knowledge of some solutions for low literacy. Projects and programs ranged from well-established community adult literacy classes, and personal visits to care centres to share stories and discuss current events, to the important role of community libraries.

"Literacy for seniors is the lever. It will be our ticket to involvement in the solution for our planet."

Walter Pitman, Toronto, ON

The common ingredients for success included the importance of a friendly, informal environment that is easily accessible and community-centred; the preference for peer tutors; and the inclusion of senior learners in the design and content of the program to ensure its responsiveness to their needs.

THIRD, conference participants made recommendations for a future national literacy strategy and for the successful operation of older adult literacy training. These recommendations, based on the premise that literacy and education are basic human rights as proclaimed by Unesco, are listed in detail in the appendices of this report. Some of the core recommendations:

- That seniors should take the lead in developing partnerships to tackle the problems of low literacy among older Canadians.
- That literacy problems of older Canadians and the need for their resolution be communicated loudly and clearly to the general public, educators, professional associations and governments.
- That community agencies, school boards, unions and all levels of government should support literacy training for seniors.
- That the private sector should take on a significant role in the solution of literacy problems, donating both time and funds to solutions.
- That **One Voice** should stimulate positive action on the issue, in areas such as fund-raising, the establishment of a data base on literacy research (in both official languages and taking into account Canada's ethno-cultural mix), and the start up and analysis of demonstration projects.
- That projects should be community-based and include peer tutors.
- That seniors with low literacy should be supported more effectively in the community, for example with graphic and audiovisual versions of essential information.
- That seniors and **One Voice** coordinate an active lobby to achieve these recommendations.

The next step in **One Voice**'s literacy initiative is the design and writing of the National Literacy Strategy for Older Canadians, to be released in October 1990.

1 Introduction

Low literacy is a problem of planetary dimensions. Directly or indirectly, it concerns all states and all peoples.

The widespread illiteracy revealed by current research is evidence that, for hundreds of millions of people around the world, the right to education is not ensured. Illiteracy is an impediment to the enjoyment of other human rights and a grave threat to the development and progress of humanity. It was within this broad context that the United Nations designated 1990 as International Literacy Year.

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*"Organizations like **One Voice** are the key to stimulating action and influencing attitudes."*

Murray Cardiff, MP (PC, Huron-Bruce)

That low literacy is a concern for Canadian senior citizens should not come as a surprise. After all, our seniors grew up at a time in history when schooling was disturbed by world wars and a global economic depression. Only recently has the Canadian economy changed from a rural, agricultural base (when children were expected to leave school to work on the farm when needed) to an urban, industrial and service orientation. Quality of teacher training and the commitment to universal education for Canadian children have also improved significantly. Due to these factors, those born in the years 1920 to 1935, now aged 55 to 69, missed many opportunities for learning throughout their lives, a fact confirmed by the staggering 64% who were found to have some degree of trouble reading by the recent survey conducted by Statistics Canada for the National Literacy Secretariat.

These seniors may have coped with varying success without being able to read or write or do simple arithmetic. However, later in life, they often find it increasingly difficult to get along. In today's 'information age', they need to be literate to com-

municate with their family and friends, to manage their own affairs and to remain living independently in the community.

Many seniors came to this country as young people from another land, speaking a language other than English or French. They may or may not have been literate in their mother tongue. If they moved into a well-organized ethnic community, it may not have been necessary to learn one of Canada's official languages. New immigrants are in a similar position, but often find it necessary to learn English or French to earn a living.

> *"I did grade school but my parents wouldn't send me to high school. No one wanted to go to school as much as I did."*
>
> *Eva Bonniface, Sudbury, ON*

For these and other ethnic Canadians, learning to read and write English or French is more than "the icing on the cake," says Dr. Kappu Desai, nutritionist and member of the National Advisory Council on Aging. "It is a bread and butter issue," she says. "Ethnic Canadians don't need to become literate merely to read and write. They need to read and write to figure out how the system works. They need to understand how this country functions, from traffic signals to government forms to the instructions on prescription drugs."

Literacy problems came out of the closet when Canadians read the results of the Southam Literacy Survey in 1987. Though the survey sample numbers were fairly small, the results showed a significant trend: a quarter of our population can't read or write very well. The problem is at its worst in the Atlantic Provinces and Quebec, among francophones, and among senior citizens. These trends were confirmed by Statistics Canada's Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities, conducted in 1989, results of which were released at the end of May 1990.

The United Nations classifies people who have more than four years and less than nine years schooling as being moderately or functionally illiterate. Most Canadians with literacy problems fall into this category.

Twenty four per cent of the adult Canadians surveyed by Southam had moderate problems. This percentage climbed to 39% for those over 55. More than half of Canadians over 65 have less than grade nine education.

The Statistics Canada survey measured reading, writing and numeracy skills by administering functional tests of varying complexity to a sample of some 9500 Canadians aged 16 to 69. It established four levels of ability in each skill area; those for reading are listed here.

> *"We know there is a problem. Let's get on with the job of fixing it."*
>
> *Thelma Chalifoux, Edmonton, AB*

Survey Group	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
All	7%	9%	22%	62%
Seniors (55-69)	15%	21%	29%	36%
Francophones	4%	14%	25%	57%
Québec	6%	14%	25%	57%
Atlantic regions	6%	13%	30%	52%

Level 1 — Canadians at this level have difficulty dealing with printed materials. They most likely identify themselves as people who cannot read.

Level 2 — Canadians at this level can use printed materials only for limited purposes such as finding a familiar word in a simple text. They would likely recognize themselves as having difficulties with common reading materials.

Level 3 — Canadians at this level can use reading materials in a variety of situations, provided the material is simple, clearly laid out and the tasks involved are not too complex. While these people generally do not see themselves as having major reading difficulties, they tend to avoid situations requiring reading.

Level 4 — Canadians at this level meet most everyday reading demands. This is a large and diverse group which exhibits a wide range of reading skills.

As found by Southam, the Statistics Canada survey confirmed that seniors, francophones, Québec and the Atlantic provinces fared worst.

For seniors, inadequate education is not the only reason for these poor scores. Literacy problems in later life include the loss of literacy skills. People who don't read or write every day tend to lose their skills over time. Similarly, people who live in isolation lose their ability to express themselves verbally. Hearing and vision impairments can hinder ability.

Seniors who are illiterate are at risk in our society. They are more likely to be exploited and to be misinformed. They are at greater risk of serious illness and injury. For all these reasons, **One Voice**, The Canadian Seniors Network, drew together in April 1990 an interested group of literacy practitioners, seniors, educators, social agencies, policy makers and other professionals to discuss the roots and effects of older adult illiteracy and explore solutions.

This conference, *Learning — That's Life!*, spanned three days and touched on dozens of issues central to the United Nations' avowed goal of literacy for all by the year 2000.

The outcome of those presentations and discussions is the subject of this report.

2 The Context of the Problem

Illiteracy in Canada is not a new problem; it is only a newly discovered problem. Perhaps the most important accomplishment of the 1987 Southam Literacy Survey was to put literacy, and the Canadians who have problems reading, writing and calculating, in the public eye. While our nation undoubtedly fares better than many other countries, it is essential to have basic literacy skills to fully participate in today's Canadian society.

The 1990 Statistics Canada Literacy Survey confirmed that literacy is a problem in Canada. Fully 38% of the population surveyed had some degree of trouble meeting everyday reading demands. Many of these people are older Canadians.

What is Illiteracy?

The simplest definition of illiteracy is that it is a difficulty reading, writing or calculating. In real life, however, it is whatever prevents us from understanding what we need to know. By this definition, literacy embraces all knowledge necessary to understand the world around us and to have control over our everyday lives.

"There are many aspects to literacy: it can be literary, artistic, technical . . . some of us are techno-morons. We are on many different paths."

Walter Pitman, Toronto, ON

Illiteracy has many faces. We are all 'illiterate' in some way — because we have no knowledge of a given technology, for example. We can be excluded from this knowledge in two ways: we may lack the tools to understand, or we may be purposely excluded by virtue of the language used.

Some exclusion is inevitable or natural. For example, it is inevitable that the minute details of nuclear physics be the exclusive domain of nuclear physicists. It is natural for the creative relationship between artists or musicians and their work to be their exclusive domain.

But the exclusion of people from information they need in their everyday

lives is neither inevitable nor natural. It is destructive. It allows the exercise of power by the informed over the uninformed.

The Persistence of Illiteracy

Illiteracy cannot be viewed in isolation. Its close alignment with poverty demands that we view it in the context of both individual lives and Canadian society at large.

This applies to understanding the problem as well as designing the solution. Though we must tackle illiteracy on an individual basis by teaching people to read, this act is incomplete if the greater problems of poverty and powerlessness continue to exist.

"Illiterate doesn't equal stupid. In fact, coping with illiteracy requires smarts."

Walter Pitman, Toronto, ON

Throughout this century, education in Canada has been dispensed on the basis of 'need to learn' rather than 'right to learn'. It has been perfectly acceptable for children of farmers and labourers to have fewer years of schooling than children of bankers and lawyers. Even today, education often directs children into narrow vocational streams, restricts their range of endeavour, and dispenses with the greater pursuit of knowledge in favour of a limited view of future employment.

There is limited commitment in Canada to adult education and on-the-job training. Walter Pitman, Director of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, told conference delegates that the average Japanese worker receives 200 hours of training annually; the average Canadian worker, 2 hours. Literacy training for citizens outside the workforce is even lower on the political agenda.

Positions of privilege are protected by language. The language of professionals, politicians and bureaucrats is thick with jargon and double meaning. It is wielded like a sword against those who stand outside the walls of privilege. It is even used in everyday pamphlets, press releases and government publications that pertain to quite ordinary matters such as income tax and social assistance.

Another way the status quo is protected is through our system of social beliefs. People who are privileged are encouraged to believe that their status is a consequence of their own talent, skill or hard work. People who aren't privileged are encouraged to believe their situation is their own fault. They are variously seen as stupid or lazy or uncivilized.

This pattern is apparent when people with low literacy blame themselves for not understanding a poorly written text. It is also reflected in social policies that abandon collective responsibility and promote a doctrine of 'every man for himself'. As much as these social factors affect young people and people of working age, they weigh especially heavily on Canadian seniors. Even those seniors who were self-supporting in middle age may find their income and circumstances reduced in older age. When these factors are combined with illiteracy, the outcome can be very difficult.

"Doctors, lawyers, employers, unions, community groups, advocacy organizations have all been guilty of writing that is complex and difficult to understand. We all make the assumption that everyone can read."

Ruth Baldwin, Ottawa, ON

Why Literacy is Important

The key to solving the many problems now facing our country is the willing participation of all citizens in the solution. Like other Canadians, seniors in the 1990s want access to the decision-making process. Only recently have they emerged as effective lobbyists on a wide agenda of issues that affect them directly. But they also have taken on a share of the responsibility for our country's path to the future, at home and in the global community.

Seen in this context, literacy is a lever. It is one of the tools we must wield to extend social and political participation to all Canadians.

Margery Boyce, policy adviser to the Honourable Monique Vézina, the federal Minister of State for Seniors, summarized well how low literacy in older age becomes an increasing problem for people.

> "Persons with poor reading skills cope by relying on friends and various methods to get the information they need. Often, they successfully hide the fact that they have difficulty reading.
>
> But as we grow older our support systems often change. Neighbours move, family members take on other responsibilities, our circle of acquaintances may shrink.
>
> "The aging process may contribute to the problem too. Diminished hearing or sight, for example, make it more difficult to hear verbal instructions without assistance, to decipher instructions on medications, to read and complete forms, and to find our way around by reading signs. Our world becomes confusing and our quality of life diminished."

Literacy is a very real necessity. Seniors want to know how to read and write well enough to fill out forms, write cheques, and keep an eye on their affairs. Frequently, people with low literacy skills feel like foreigners in their own community. What may seem convenient and

"In today's political environment, citizens are expected to look after themselves. There is an increased emphasis on independent living. That is fine for senior citizens who are well equipped to continue living independently. But it is a difficult challenge for the illiterate and poor older person who sees supports slowly eroding as his or her needs steadily increase."

Noël Kinsella, Associate Under Secretary of State, Canada

accessible to some could present embarrassing and insurmountable difficulty to an illiterate person.

The most basic information, such as bus schedules and pamphlets advertising community services, may be as difficult to understand as a foreign language is to otherwise literate people.

"Ethnic seniors are dismissed because they don't speak the language. They don't understand the system. They are not felt necessary for the community. They are looked upon as intruders, a temporary inconvenience to be tolerated."

KAPPU DESAI, TORONTO, ON

The inability to read and write does more than decrease quality of life. People with low literacy have higher risk of medical problems. Isolated elderly persons with sensory problems and low literacy often misunderstand medical and dietary instructions. Dosing errors, compliance problems, and drug misuse and abuse are all more frequent. A quarter of the over 65s admitted to hospital are suffering one or more adverse drug reactions. Illness or death is a possible result.

Because low literacy is so directly linked with poor education and poverty, seniors who can't read and write well are often at the bottom of the economic ladder. They have few resources to right their situation; they are often exploited because of their inability to communicate. They frequently don't know about, and fail to use, existing services to which they are entitled. Illiterate ethnic seniors, especially, are very vulnerable to misinformation.

For immigrant seniors, the opportunity to learn is the key to survival. Like any other immigrants to a new country, seniors need to learn the new language to understand the culture and to work and live within the social system. For seniors in a language minority, becoming literate in their mother tongue may be an important exercise in cultural survival, a step in the reinforcement of their community family.

Barriers to Solving the Problem

Perhaps the most serious obstacle is that literacy training for seniors is not a high social or political priority. Funds may be available for recreational education (for example, arts, crafts and other hobbies) but, strangely, not for literacy training. In one case study discussed at this conference, participants heard that Medicine Hat College has spent years writing and rewriting a proposal for a seniors' literacy program, only to be turned down repeatedly.

"People who come to literacy programs for help are the tip of the iceberg. The majority of those with a reading problem have little conception of it. Our task is to locate them and learn what types of problems they're experiencing."

STAN JONES, OTTAWA, ON

Similarly, though money may be available to teach English or French as a second language to new immigrants, the same commitment to teach the elder immigrants may be absent. A program to teach older immigrant Canadians in Winnipeg found itself at the bottom of the funding ladder. The program was shifted from one location to another, often without warning. Only when the volunteer administrator pulled the program out of the school system did it achieve some stability.

Seniors advocate Dr. Kappu Desai pointed out that in Ontario, funds are available for literacy programs only for employable people. "Seniors are not regarded as employable, and therefore teaching them to read and write is not important," she said. Even worse, declared Walter Pitman, "is the myth that seniors can't learn, that they are too old." Despite the fact that the myth has been debunked many times over, it is still used as justification for not funding seniors' education.

In some cases, the way seniors view themselves can be a barrier to change. Though the conference participants certainly saw themselves as agents of change, many others view retirement as a time to reap the benefits of a life of hard work, to pursue personal interests, perhaps just to "do nothing" for once.

For such people, there is limited motivation for change. Moreover, seniors may be more accepting of circumstances than younger generations, who have grown accustomed to questioning authority, to pushing for change. For people of our older generations, acceptance of things you can't change is regarded as a virtue, not a fault.

This attitude of 'leaving well enough alone' may unconsciously be promoted by caregivers who perceive change as an unnecessary disruption of routine.

> *"From my experience in the field of general education and older people, I know that there are problems of crossing boundaries . . . even hostility sometimes. Caregivers for older people tend to be overburdened. Perhaps understandably they see any request to add to their workload or disrupt the established patterns as unwelcome intrusions."*
>
> DIANNE NORTON, LONDON, ENGLAND

In terms of program design, the lack of documented research into the field of seniors' literacy training is a stumbling block to understanding what makes a program a success. What sounds good in theory often doesn't work in practice. Astonishingly, there is still debate on why we should teach older adults to read, and considerable disagreement over what is appropriate training and certification for literacy tutors.

There is a tendency for untrained tutors to depend on packaged programs without flexibility. This makes literacy classes too much like "school". It is generally conceded that this is counterproductive.

The very diversity of Canadian seniors creates a challenge for literacy trainers, who must take into consideration the range

of ethnic backgrounds, geographic locations, education and experience of potential learners. Older ethnic Canadians may not be literate in their own language. Designing a literacy program for immigrant Canadians requires a sensitivity to cultural differences. Class materials are not always available or appropriate to the learners' needs.

Each ethnic group learns differently. For example, some eastern European students in a literacy class were very serious about their studies and couldn't laugh at their own mistakes. In contrast, some of the oriental students laughed easily. When working with a mixed class, it is necessary to respect all points of view and to achieve a workable integration of cultures.

In a community where English or French is a minority language, many small community or literacy groups may be trying to accomplish the same goal independently. This can scatter resources and funding. Francophone and anglophone learners have differing needs, different ways of thinking. This may be difficult for the majority language group to understand.

"You must deal with the whole person, including their loves and hates and dealings with death, just as you must with all seniors. You must respond to their needs at the time. Sometimes, they will lead and you must follow."

Sr. Claire Jobin, Winnipeg, MB

A Question of Attitude

This conference confirmed that literacy cannot be viewed in isolation. Teaching literacy to seniors will not instantly relieve their poverty and powerlessness. Not all seniors can or will become literate.

Any approaches to the problem must work within the cultural context of the people for whom the help is intended. If literacy training is seen as condescending, and fails to take into consideration the many generational, class and cultural variables, then it is doomed to fail.

Literacy training can be viewed as an instrument of positive, progressive social change — for the individual, the community, and Canadian society as a whole. This is an essential component of mobilizing our nation to adopt a vision of a common good, a common destiny. The difference between perceived change — the window dressing of social programs — and real change will be the measure of commitment at all levels of society.

In changing times such as these, we have the opportunity to see whole nations mobilized to achieve a common goal. In Canada, this goal must be to accept our collective and individual responsibilities for our country's welfare, its environment, and its people. Giving all citizens the means to understand and participate in the world around them is the first step.

3 Sample Solutions

Successful programs and activities cited throughout the conference had many things in common. Some programs brought together many of these ingredients for success.

One such example is Sister Claire Jobin's White Flower House, named so because of the white flower's association with healing and medicine in oriental tradition.

Many of the members of White Flower House in Winnipeg are oriental, but the school caters to adults from 16 different countries who speak 14 different languages. The majority of the participants are illiterate in their native language.

After several moves, Sister Jobin and White Flower are located in a residential home, which she shares with the cat-in-residence (who is the official greeter and ice-breaker at White Flower) and a large group of ethnic students ranging in age from 50 to 84, who arrive as early as 7 am and leave after noon.

The atmosphere is caring, very casual. The newest students are taught vocabulary, pattern learning and do a lot of colouring to reinforce learning. After they have a grasp of the basics, they learn idioms and humour (which they find very entertaining) and begin reading. "Their vocabulary is okay," says Sister Jobin, "but their pronunciation is out to lunch."

> ***"To be successful, seniors literacy programs must involve the seniors themselves from the start."***
>
> *Noël Kinsella, Ottawa, ON*

She emphasizes teaching the whole person, responding to the students' needs at the time. When books weren't available to meet the students' needs, Sister Jobin wrote her own.

Funding of $18,000 includes Sister Jobin's donation of her salary, some other donations and unreliable government funding. "We are surviving," says Sister Jobin, "but we don't depend on outside funding. The bureaucracy drives me crazy! My recommendation is to ignore the funding question and just go ahead."

In summary, some of the factors in White Flower House's success:

~ informal environment

"It is important to laugh at our mistakes. When you relax, you learn."

Sr. Claire Jobin, Winnipeg, MB

- ~ Respect for the students as individuals
- ~ Taking cultural differences into consideration
- ~ Appreciating the experience that older adults bring with them
- ~ Working with the whole person
- ~ Students have a strong sense of ownership of the house and the program (and probably Sister Jobin and the official house cat)
- ~ House works with available funds
- ~ House is a true learning centre and has its own status within the community
- ~ Students get to the house on their own (but bus fares may be subsidized)
- ~ Students direct the curriculum and share responsibilities (eg. making the food for coffee breaks)
- ~ A real will and determination to make White Flower house work

Though many of the programs discussed at the conference were directed by community agencies, the conference also heard about programs involving private enterprise. Susan Nutbrown and Anne Desrochers-Black introduced the conference participants to The Learning Centre. The Learning Centre's partners include the Ottawa School Board, Apple Canada, Apple Education, Carleton University, the Ottawa Carleton Education Foundation and the Secretary of State. Local merchants and businesses also support the Centre, which offers computer-aided learning to adults in several locations throughout the national capital region at YM/YWCAs, the Salvation Army and so forth.

Literacy or illiteracy is not mentioned in the context of the program. Instead, the program is referred to as continuing education. As computers are used in everyday living, the students are encouraged to feel part of the main stream of life. Students are tested and interviewed first, but classes are structured around the students' needs and timetables. The downtown centre is open 45 hours a week and is on a main bus route.

The program is free to students. They can come to the centre and work on the computers without people knowing they are learning to read and write. When students don't turn up for their course, they are contacted. This shows them that someone cares.

The program offers a neutral, non-judgemental milieu that is not like a school. The students learn at their own pace. "The less it is like a school," say the staff, "the more comfortable the students feel."

"The extent of older persons' involvement with technology might surprise you. I suspect that research will show there is nowhere near the gap that people expect."

Bob Williston, Toronto, ON

The program is expensive to set up (though The Learning Centre receives assistance from companies like Apple). Computer training requires at least as much teacher time per student as traditional literacy training.

The Learning Centre succeeds for these reasons:

- Creative funding to afford professional teachers, storefront location and equipment
- Program is neutral, nonjudgemental
- Course is based on the students' needs and they learn at their own pace
- Students know that they are important; they are contacted if absent
- The milieu is relaxed and not like a school
- Every effort is made to increase students' self-esteem and to avoid the stigma of illiteracy
- Students feel they 'own' a piece of the technological age, are more confident about meeting technological challenges

Another success cited at the conference was LEEP (Literacy Education for the Elderly Program), a series of demonstration projects in the United States. LEEP had a great deal of success because it combined existing community literacy and seniors groups. It was client-centred, used peer tutors and was experiential. It taught skills that seniors needed then and there. Another major factor in the program's success was its involvement of seniors from the start.

The theme of making use of community resources and, generally, of involving the community was a reoccurring one.

"What about computer phobia? It's true that some people are a little afraid to start with, but with a little psychology and a lot of patience you will see excellent results. We think it's important to reassure people that the computer is nothing but a learning tool and that they don't have to use it if they don't want to. Wait until the learner shows a little curiousity, start with easy programs and make sure they're successful in their first attempts. The look of joy and self-satisfaction on their faces when they work it out is well worth the effort!"

ANNE DESROCHERS-BLACK, OTTAWA, ON

Mary Ballantyne noted that many libraries are de facto literacy learning centres, often using cassettes with read-along books. A library in Winnipeg has a "bookmates" program that pairs adults and preschool children. In Toronto, Tom Buchanan visits the Parkdale Nursing Home weekly to conduct a poetry-writing and current-events workshop. Why does he do it? To stimulate the residents, to help them keep current, and to share his love of words.

The importance of using existing community resources was broached in another way by Florian Levesque, who advised consolidating the francophone groups for the aged, and grouping "the young and the not so young" together.

"A day doesn't go by when there isn't some sort of activity going on for users of that library. The daily newspaper is always there to read; there are magazines, pocketbooks — all the materials of a library. But added to that is a friendly caring staff who don't mind if 75-year-old Mrs. Smith drops in at 10 in the morning and doesn't leave until noon. She may be simply glancing at the pictures in a magazine but she's involved, not cloistered in her home. . . . But this is something that bean counters don't understand."

MARY BALLANTYNE, KINGSTON, ON

"This boosts the effectiveness of existing programs and resources, and creates a warm family spirit."

Volunteers are the active ingredient in peer training programs like Laubach Literacy Training. This program uses one-to-one teaching, two hours a week with peer tutors. Tutors receive 10 to 12 hours training and make a one-year commitment. Laubach has liaison with other groups such as the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program (RSVP). Philip Rose, a Laubach/RSVP representative, attributes their success to using "whatever works!" (but mainly a phonics-based approach to language) and to the fantastic network of volunteer tutors and students that develops.

Finally, some successful programs were concerned with supporting those with low literacy. In Ottawa-Carleton, a medical awareness program is being designed to help sensitize seniors and others to drug use and abuse. In Saskatchewan, a drug awareness program uses video technology to convey drug information to seniors, and encourages people to bring pills to the seniors centre and discuss their use with a pharmacist.

It is apparent from this brief overview that there are many paths to success. However, the recurring themes of respect for others, building self-esteem, informal teaching environments, and peer training are common to many projects.

Programs that succeeded were able to consolidate their resources, use creative approaches to funding and depended on a great deal of determination and commitment by founders and students.

"How do you help a person who doesn't want to be helped, won't admit he's got literacy problems?"

REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE ROYAL CANADIAN LEGION

4 Conference Findings

Beginning from the premise that literacy is a basic human right, the participants reaffirmed many basic principles of community action.

How Can We Solve the Problem?

The broadest need is, of course, to assist seniors who cannot read and write to do so. However, the extent to which literacy training is pursued will reflect a person's own goals and circumstances. Every opportunity must be offered for seniors to achieve the level of literacy desired.

Conference delegates found that older Canadians had varying literacy goals. The first group are those who now enjoy a high or reasonable degree of literacy. These seniors can take advantage of continuing education to maintain and expand their literacy skills.

A second group, the largest, includes those seniors with low literacy skills. Those who wish to improve their literacy skills require programs that reflect their various backgrounds and skill levels.

Those who cannot or prefer not to improve their literacy skills also require support. Conference delegates were firm in recommending that all sectors of society recognize this fact and provide whatever support is appropriate to ensure the safety and well-being of illiterate seniors.

> *"Is a lack of basic skills a problem for individuals or for the institutions that serve them? Older people have learned to manage their lives in the context of society. They have developed compensatory skills. Do we as professionals have any right to tell them they need to read and write to lead fuller and more active lives in the community?"*
>
> DIANNE NORTON, LONDON, ENGLAND

Delegates observed that not enough is known about the successful ingredients for a literacy training program for elder persons. Participants suggested the need to establish demonstration programs to

identify the elements of successful literacy training.

To facilitate program design, many participants and speakers called for consolidation of existing resources and further research. We need to understand more than the roots of illiteracy. We need to know what is being done now across Canada to solve the problem.

"Service providers need to be willing to communicate in other languages to older people who do not or may never learn how to speak English or French. Information should be available on cassette tapes or video cassettes in various languages, and should be available in places where ethnic seniors meet."

Kappu Desai, Toronto, ON

With a complete listing of available resources and active programs, it might be possible to:

- coordinate and support existing programs and resources to achieve the greatest impact; and
- design effective new programs to satisfy unmet needs.

Isolation and physical and medical risk to seniors resulting from illiteracy emerged as a major concern. It is not only necessary to provide literacy training wherever possible. It is also necessary to support those who cannot read or write, and to give better support to those who are newly literate. Professionals who provide community, social and medical services were admonished to be more aware of illiteracy and other special needs, such as those of people with hearing or vision impairments.

The need for specialized programs for minority language groups and for ethnic seniors was spelled out. Participants and speakers felt that consolidating resources was the key to creating a strong local minority-language literacy program for young and old.

It was also thought that, given adequate funding, literacy programs in English or French could be administered within the ethnic community. Participants warned, however, that literacy training in French or English is not enough to serve the needs of the ethnic communities. Literacy training should be supported by information in the mother tongue, preferably using graphic and audiovisual materials.

Finally, virtually every speaker and participant commented that we must do everything we can to remove the stigma of low literacy. We must, they said, communicate this fact and the need for seniors' literacy programs to the general public, appropriate government departments and the private sector.

believe that literacy programs must go to where the seniors are. For many immigrants, that can be at home, at their church, synagogue or the ethnic community centre in their neighbourhood."

MARY BALLANTYNE, KINGSTON, ON

How Should This Be Done?

Community-based literacy programs had universal support among the conference participants. The second strong finding was that informal programs were by far the most successful.

Participants spoke of the importance of learners feeling a sense of ownership of their program, of their literacy. They noted that people should be the subject of the process, not the object. People make themselves literate; they are not made literate. Becoming literate is a voluntary act.

They suggested that literacy programs work best when they start from people's strengths — that is, their experiences — and downplay their weaknesses, including bad experiences with formal schooling.

The participants stated that we must accept people as they are — active or passive — and that literacy programs should be both deeply sensitive and practical. They must give the learners the skills and knowledge needed to enjoy life.

They also confirmed their commitment to lifelong learning, the importance of supporting newly literate people, and the need for the continuing growth and literacy of seniors who are now literate.

For the most part, participants preferred solutions that included volunteer teachers and tutors. However, those with volunteer experience noted that some programs are much better at attracting volunteers than keeping them. A good volunteer-based literacy program must take care to support and reward its volunteers.

Should seniors literacy training be part of adult literacy training or a special program? Some said that seniors were more comfortable among their peers. Others emphasized the importance of keeping seniors integrated in the community, with all ages, from young to old. This was felt especially important for minority language groups.

How should projects be funded? Participants alluded to the lack of reliable funding sources and the extreme difficulty of getting literacy programs funded in the first place. They recommended that all levels of government, as well as the private sector, contribute funds to literacy.

"Effective political action begins with advocacy and, ultimately, leads to a working partnership between government and many concerned parties."

MARGERY BOYCE, OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE (SENIORS), OTTAWA, ON

Participants agreed that placing a greater priority on seniors' literacy programs should not be to the detriment of literacy training in other sectors of society.

Finally, participants repeatedly called for action by seniors to achieve their literacy objectives. Recommended strategies focused on consultation and partnership building at all levels.

"The government of Canada has made a sincere commitment to literacy. All our futures depend on it."

MURRAY CARDIFF, MP (PC, HURON-BRUCE)

Who Should Do It?

Conference participants firmly believed that seniors themselves must be actively and directly involved in solutions, and that seniors with low literacy must be involved in designing programs that work best for them. They favoured programs with a core of volunteers assisted by staff coordinators and administrators.

Participants discussed the creation of a loose network of seniors' organizations, community groups, business, government, unions and nongovernmental organizations to take joint responsibility for older adult literacy. They particularly encouraged the involvement of the private sector in literacy programs, pointing to successful examples of private enterprise at work.

Participants noted that seniors can be part of the solution, not just by assisting other seniors to improve their skills, but by tutoring across the generations and by working to convince Canadians of the high value of literacy.

All agreed with Unesco's Leslie Limage that achieving full literacy among seniors by the year 2000 will require a clear moral commitment at every level of government to mobilize human and financial resources. It will require the support of all citizens for the right of every Canadian to education and literacy.

5 Conclusion

Learning — That's Life! brought together an extraordinary group of people to discuss solutions for a very ordinary problem — not being able to read, write or do basic arithmetic. Their far-reaching and very practical conclusions will be read by all interested in the problems of seniors' literacy. Summaries of their recommendations are listed in Appendix A.

The next step for **One Voice** is the assembly of a working group, which will meet over the summer of 1990 to draw up a National Literacy Strategy for Older Canadians. Input to this group is welcomed. The Strategy will be released in October 1990.

In the meantime, the next step for the participants in *Learning — That's Life!* is to carry all they learned at the conference back to their communities, and to start putting their knowledge into practice. For without individual action, there can be no change.

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*"Literacy is a major problem in our society and **One Voice** is an organization that can make a difference."*

WALTER PITMAN, TORONTO, ON

A Session Recommendations

APPENDIX

Virtually every presentation and workshop concluded with recommendations for action. For simplicity and ease of reference, these are presented in point form along with general conclusions. The original language has been retained to capture the flavour of the sessions.

The final conference session gave delegates a chance to put their heads together to develop specific recommendations towards the development of **One Voice**'s National Literacy Strategy for Older Canadians. These suggestions will be found at the end of this Appendix.

"Developments in literacy for older Canadians"

Murray Cardiff

- ~ Partnership is the key to achieving change.
- ~ Literacy training should be taken to people, not the other way around.
- ~ The government of Canada has made a sincere contribution to literacy.

"Our society has been busy training the elite, and bouncing the low achievers out of the educational system because they mess up the grade point averages."

WALTER PITMAN, TORONTO, ON

"It's everybody's business: Why we can't ignore the problem"

Walter Pitman

- ~ We should view illiteracy as collective failure, not as an individual failure.
- ~ Literacy training must take into consideration the richness of personal experience and the difficulty of bridging this gap.
- ~ Those over 50 are responsible for the way the world is now, and we must take responsibility for fixing it.

"Reading, writing, 'rithmetic: The challenge continues"

Cam Cathcart, John Tourangeau, Eva Boniface

- ~ You can do anything if you want to do it badly enough.
- ~ If there's anybody out there who can't read or write, all I can say is, get back to school.

"Illiteracy and older Canadians: Startling facts"

Stan Jones

- ~ Because the main reason for illiteracy among seniors is lack of access to education, seniors' right to education should be considered a basic right.
- ~ Everything possible should be done to remove the stigma of illiteracy, starting with avoiding the word itself.

"Literacy strategies for older adults: International perspectives"

Dianne Norton

- ~ We need better research to define the problem.
- ~ We must examine community-based program delivery.
- ~ We must look at the impact of ethnic differences.

"Computer-assisted learning: The right choice for seniors?"

Susan Nutbrown (English session)

- ~ The less it is like school, the more comfortable students feel.
- ~ Budget extra money for professional teachers and equipment.
- ~ Follow up students; show them that you care!

Anne Desrochers-Black (French session)

- ~ All literacy programs should use the same computers to facilitate compatibility.
- ~ For students with low literacy, MacIntosh computers are the preferred brand. They work from a graphics base and have large, adjustable characters.
- ~ The student should control the pace of his/her own learning (especially for older learners).
- ~ Computer monitors should have large, clear characters.
- ~ Computer programs should be easy to use.

"Effective literacy programs for older learners"

Patti Martineau

- ~ Be sure your funding proposal is well backed by needs statistics etc.
- ~ Be prepared for multiple revisions.
- ~ Develop a variety of potential funding sources.
- ~ Be aware of potential conflict with educational authorities.
- ~ Seniors working with seniors works best.
- ~ Try to gain publicity by inviting the local CBC station for a look.
- ~ Don't take no for an answer!

Sister Claire Jobin

- ~ Literacy programs need a sense of permanence, consistency
- ~ Teach the English idiom, teach humour!
- ~ Respect differences but don't dwell on them.

"Computers are very patient and never display such emotions as frustration or impatience. Their very discretion protects against embarrassment or discomfort. These features are very important to adults who can't read or write."

ANNE DESROCHERS-BLACK, OTTAWA, ON

- Make it their house, their course.
- To heck with bureaucracy, funding. Just dive in and do it!
- Your students are your best advertising agency.
- Let students direct the program.

"Illiteracy is not a comfortable situation for people to talk about."

PATTI MARTINEAU, MEDICINE HAT, AB

"Promoting francophone literacy in an anglophone society."

Florian Levesque

- The annual meeting of **One Voice** should back francophones across the country in the creation of a national francophone literacy group.
- Don't separate old from young. This kills the group and family spirit, which we need to encourage mutual support and a commitment to working together.
- Know the social and cultural context of the learners.
- Meet/stimulate seniors "where they live", both in terms of interest and location (for example, go to hobby groups, coop housing, day centres etc.)

"Lifelong learning for everyone"

Robert Williston

- Community-based programmes are bes..
- Look to ability — what people can do well — everyone has a skill.
- Low literacy seniors should be treated just the same as other adult learners: with respect
- We are all illiterate in one way or another, and we can all learn. We need to lessen the stigma of illiteracy.
- Knowledge and learning are separate issues.
- Seniors can teach one another.
- You need a good basic infrastructure to make a program successful.
- Program success hinges on treating volunteers well.
- Experience is the secret ingredient, seniors' advantage.
- Accept seniors as they are — active or passive.

"Literacy and lifelong learning: Seniors' rights to independent living."

Noël Kinsella

- Literacy must be considered a basic human right.
- Literacy programs must respond to people's fundamental needs.
- People must be the subjects of the process, not the objects.

"Society should not always think of productivity in terms of money earned. Illiteracy affects the whole family."

KAPPU DESAI, TORONTO, ON

- ~ Literacy should be part of a lifelong education to improve our economic, social and cultural well-being.
- ~ Literacy programs must respond to the diversity of needs.

"Research: A vital part of the solution to older literacy"

Stan Jones (English session)

- ~ Look to success stories, testimonials and personal histories as well as to formal information sources.
- ~ Improve communications flow from the grass roots level.
- ~ Those who have experience teaching older adults should chronicle their successes so that we can learn from them.
- ~ A combination of trained paid teachers and trained peer tutors is ideal.

Hélène Dallaire (French session)

- ~ We need community support, a non-threatening environment and local volunteers.
- ~ Learners needs should determine teaching methods and content — be creative!
- ~ Literacy programs must never belittle the learners.
- ~ Make older adults aware that they are not alone. Demystify the problem, encourage them not to fear admitting their illiteracy.
- ~ **One Voice** should compile all useful information to assist those in the field with choosing the right routes to literacy.
- ~ Private enterprise/industry is part of the need/problem and should accept its responsibility but we shouldn't reduce illiteracy only to an economic problem with economic solutions.
- ~ We must increase social consciousness of the problem.
- ~ Underline the importance of teaching in their language: learning a second language is not the same as teaching literacy.
- ~ Teaching materials must reflect the learners' culture.

"Literacy tutors should stay away from packaged programs because very often it's structured programs like these that were the original root of reading problems experienced by older adults."

GORDON NORE, TORONTO, ON

"Peer training: Seniors as volunteer literacy tutors"

Philip Rose

- ~ We need strong teaching programs and support/supervision for tutors.
- ~ Use word-of-mouth/media/success stories to recruit volunteers.
- ~ Must respect the dignity of the student.
- ~ Combine language training with the learners' personal history and experience.
- ~ Certify trainers, evaluate tutors.
- ~ Tutors should have job descriptions.
- ~ No tests!
- ~ Create a supportive teaching environment.

"Multiculturalism: Literacy challenges today and tomorrow"

Kappu Desai

- ~ Ethnic seniors want to learn English/French, if they allowed to do so at their own pace and for their own identified needs.
- ~ Make information available in cassettes/video tapes so that ethnic seniors know about services — people are visual!
- ~ Funds for second-language training should go to those who are outside the workforce as well as those who are eligible for work. (At the moment, ESL for seniors is not funded because they are not considered employable.)
- ~ Take advantage of the learner's life experience.
- ~ Literacy courses could be handled by the ethnic community as long as they are funded.
- ~ Better to teach English or French than literacy in the mother tongue, but we must supply information in the mother tongue.

"A global view of literacy: Where are we now?"

Leslie Limage

- ~ Literacy is a basic human right.
- ~ Literacy programs should take into consideration the seniors' 40 or more years of experience.
- ~ Achieving literacy requires political will/government support.
- ~ Achieving literacy requires financial commitment.
- ~ Achieving literacy requires the support of all citizens.
- ~ We must recognize that we are interdependent, that literacy and the lack thereof affects all of us.

"Since many older ethnocultural seniors are not literate in any language, they therefore depend largely on word-of-mouth for their information. As a result, they are very vulnerable to misinformation, through commonly held misperceptions or misunderstanding in the community."

KAPPU DESAI, TORONTO, ON

"Seniors involvement in the political process: Literacy and empowerment"

Margery Boyce

- Everyone must be involved in the struggle for literacy.
- By finding answers, pressing for action and then taking part in the programs, you become involved in the political process. By becoming involved in the political process you become empowered (but she also spoke about being co-opted).
- Alert government and industry to use plain language.
- Support those who have trouble coping.
- Offer basic adult education courses that cater to special needs/interests of seniors.
- Educate seniors that there is a need.
- Assure people that they are not alone.
- The involvement of seniors must go beyond advocacy to partnership.

"Helping illiterate seniors to live in our communities"

Ruth Baldwin, Judy Creighton, Mary Ballantyne

- The federal government should expand its involvement with libraries to assist with the literacy process.
- Peer programs should be developed to assist seniors in care homes, long-term care institutions, seniors' centres etc. with short stories, poetry, group discussions of current events etc.

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e should use visual materials to put across information. For example, a graphic illustration of Canada's Food Guide. Then a non-literate person can look at the graphics and think, 'Oh, almonds, this is good for my bones!'"

KAPPU DESAI, TORONTO, ON

- Plain language should be aggressively pursued in provision of all government information, at all levels of government.
- Literacy programs must go to where the seniors are.
- Honoraria should be paid to send retired teachers, librarians to go to old age homes.
- Discussion of what we see on television helps to maintain communications skills and keeps us in touch with things (for example, current affairs programs, Jeopardy).
- Investigate and compile a directory of community services.
- Encourage local libraries to stock cassettes with follow-on books.
- Press city/local services for easy-to-read information.
- Involve the local newspaper; for example, ask for a new-reader page.

"Better use of medication: A joint responsibility"

Ray Fynes

- ~ There should be clear concise (non-legalistic) information on prescription and nonprescription drugs.
- ~ Patients must accept their share of the responsibility.
- ~ More information for patients is required through:
  - ~ original packaging dispensing
  - ~ consumer information leaflets
  - ~ standardized symbols
  - ~ information 'hot lines' using voice messaging technology
- ~ Electronic information retrieval and 'smart' drug cards should be used to prevent drug interactions, double-doctoring etc.

Ross Chapman

- ~ In many cases, doses for the elderly should be lower
- ~ Dosing schedules should be as uniform as possible, with simple instructions.
- ~ Response to drugs must be monitored.
- ~ Treat all patients including the elderly with respect. Explain things.
- ~ Allow more time for elderly patients and use audio-visual aids whenever possible.

"Plain writing focuses on the reader. It begins with the assumption that all readers have a right to be informed in a way that is clear and easy to understand — they should not have to struggle to find out what the writer is trying to say."

Ruth Baldwin, Ottawa, ON

- ~ Elderly should bring a checkoff list of questions to ask when prescribed medications.
- ~ "Smart Card" to retain history of prescriptions should be used to prevent double doctoring and drug interactions.
- ~ "Child-proof" containers may require substitution for elderly patients.
- ~ Physicians should consider life style changes before prescribing drugs.
- ~ Use 'pill packs' to assist with taking right dosage.

Patricia Carruthers-Czyzewski

- ~ Put important information first when talking to elderly patients:
  - ~ what to take
  - ~ how much
  - ~ when
  - ~ benefits
  - ~ what to do if there are side effects
- ~ Provide backup materials (pamphlets, audio tapes).

- ~ Use symbols and lower-case type for pill bottle instructions but explain the symbology.
- ~ Use simple instructions; avoid abbreviations.
- ~ Improve simplicity and readability of nonprescription product labels.
- ~ Health professionals need to be more aware of people with low literacy.
- ~ Health professionals need more training in communications skills.
- ~ Pharmacists should take longer to explain about drugs.
- ~ Drug awareness programs should be interactive and use peer facilitators.

"Promoting safety for illiterate seniors"

Elizabeth Nielsen, Beverly Webb, Bill Corns, Gordon Nore

- ~ Practitioners need to be better informed about low literacy needs.
- ~ Use of symbols is of little help.
- ~ Information must be clear and understandable.
- ~ Packages with dissimilar products should not look similar.
- ~ Develop a home safety check list.
- ~ Need to repeat the safety theme with emphasis on medication safety.
- ~ Type size, colour, glossiness of paper all affect legibility.
- ~ Consumers, government and industry must work together.
- ~ Seniors must lobby vigorously for improvements in safety.

"Meeting the Challenge in Ontario"

Gilles Morin

- ~ Plain language should be used for provincial seniors information publications.
- ~ Video and audio tapes in commonly spoken languages should be used to inform seniors who do not read about government services.
- ~ Government and nongovernmental organizations must work together to address the problem of illiteracy.
- ~ A collective resolve is required to end illiteracy.

"A person with low literacy skills concentrates most of their attention at the beginning of the message. Knowing this, the most important information should be said first."

PATRICIA CARRUTHERS-CZYZEWSKI, OTTAWA, ON

Recommendations from the final session

"Towards a National Literacy Strategy for Older Canadians"

Recommendations from the Awareness Group

We recommend:

- ~ THAT a questionnaire on all topics be prepared by **One Voice** and sent to all participants.
- ~ THAT **One Voice** establish a Literacy Subcommittee to do the follow-up on the Conference.
- ~ THAT all participants are strongly urged to go back to their particular local, regional or provincial organizations and pass on the information received at the Conference.
- ~ THAT all government cheques include a slogan confirming the need for seniors' literacy.
- ~ THAT local groups survey local capacity to provide literacy services to seniors.
- ~ FURTHER THAT they design a local awareness campaign that uses radio, television and community and daily newspapers.
- ~ FURTHER THAT a television public service announcement (PSA) be developed from the Thursday night video taping.
- ~ FURTHER THAT a radio PSA be developed from the audio from the Thursday night taping.
- ~ FURTHER THAT print advertisements on the same theme be developed by **One Voice** centrally and distributed in PMT sheets to the local groups.
- ~ FURTHER THAT local seniors' groups develop a response capacity (that is, someone to man a telephone line).
- ~ FURTHER THAT local seniors' groups draw up a schedule of media placements.
- ~ FURTHER THAT local seniors' groups approach newspapers, radio stations and television stations for donations of time and space.
- ~ FURTHER THAT local seniors' groups approach local businesses and unions to fund the costs of such an awareness campaign, and that the sponsors' names be used in the advertising.

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ymbols and pictographs can also be very helpful, but symbols can mean different things to different people. Therefore, symbols cannot be used alone."

PATRICIA CARRUTHERS-CZYZEWSKI, OTTAWA, ON

Recommendations from the Partnership/Coordination Group

Preamble

Seniors should be the key partners in any program, supported by other caring persons and organizations.

We recommend:

- ~ THAT seniors organizations like **One Voice** advocate the use of plain language and that they lobby government agencies, corporations and media for its use.

- THAT **One Voice** support community-based activities.
- THAT **One Voice** demand public statements from government and specific industries regarding their policies on literacy.
- THAT an information and communication network be established to publicize literacy programs that work.
- THAT **One Voice** be responsible for developing a centralized organization to develop programs, raise funds and disseminate information regarding seniors' literacy.

Regarding responsibility for action we recommend:

- THAT all levels of government and industry should contribute funds to literacy.
- THAT literacy programs should be supported by legislation and production of materials in plain language.
- THAT community organizations/ businesses should provide space, personnel and so forth.
- THAT professional staff should be used for program coordination.
- THAT volunteers (especially peers) should be used in program delivery.
- THAT unions should be involved in the process to take care of the concerns of older workers.

Recommendations from the Programs Group

Preamble

Local groups must be given the opportunity to make comments on the report if we are going to have any valid reaction from the local level.

We recommend:

- THAT we find out what is in place and what is already working to avoid duplication.
- THAT we procure the cooperation of both the traditional and nontraditional systems of delivery.
- THAT we identify the needs of various groups and extend the existing programs.
- THAT seniors and seniors organizations, community groups, schools boards be involved.
- THAT we should make use of health facilities and government, curriculum specialists and industry.
- THAT local organizations should take advantage of the material available from Frontier College and other projects that could serve as models. (There is little other material for design of programs for illiterate seniors.)
- THAT a priority be given to research for program development.

Recommendations from the Improving Communications Group

Preamble

Our starting point is the necessity to improve the literacy of older adults. To accomplish this, seniors themselves must be involved. Communication means empowerment. To achieve our ends, we must politicize seniors.

We recommend:

- ~ THAT we meet people at their current level and make materials understandable in any way possible — including use of graphics and audio-visual materials. We must ensure that people with low literacy have equal access to the benefits of our society.
- ~ THAT seniors take the initial initiative.
- ~ THAT community groups are the next group to be involved.
- ~ THAT literacy programs must then also include governments, corporate sponsors and the general public.
- ~ THAT the 10 principles from the Habitat Report be implemented for this report also. One of the most important principles was that seniors must be involved.

"Nothing helps more than a good dose of warmth, friendliness and respect."

Ross Chapman, Ottawa, ON

- ~ THAT government and corporate sectors, the community organizations, the general public and the seniors are informed about the importance of literacy.
- ~ THAT seniors must be functional in their own environment, and have the life skills required to cope in their daily lives.
- ~ THAT seniors are assisted to achieve the literacy level they need to function and have a reasonable quality of life. For different people, this means very different things.
- ~ THAT communications be understandable, without bafflegab, straightforward communication in a language we can understand.
- ~ THAT radio and television be given special consideration in communicating with low literacy people, who have expressed the belief that it is easiest to get information from the electronic media.
- ~ THAT any literacy program be community-based; people learn through friends and neighbours. If you can get the community process going, then you will get the message across to people.

B Biographical notes on presenters

APPENDIX

Ruth Baldwin is a literacy consultant and a trainer for plain writing. Trained in English language and as a teacher, she has worked 13 years in formal and non-formal adult education, and was president of World Literacy of Canada. She is now the owner of Plain Writing Services, a company that assists in the development of easy-to-read public information.

Mary Ballantyne is a specialist in reading and special education. Now retired from teaching, Mrs. Ballantyne is a volunteer tutor with Frontier College Prison Literacy Initiative, a consultant with Child's Play Books and a volunteer consultant for Learning Disabilities Association Kingston. She is also currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Ban Righ Foundation for Continuing University Education, Queen's University.

"Workers compensation data show that people with poor literacy are more accident prone than people who can read and write well."

Gordon Nore, Toronto, ON

The Honourable Murray Cardiff is Member of Parliament for Huron-Bruce in Ontario. He is parliamentary secretary to the Honourable Donald Mazankowski, who is the Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and Minister of Agriculture. Mr. Cardiff has been especially active in international trade and agriculture committees, meetings and discussions.

Patricia Carruthers-Czyzewski is Coordinator of Professional Development for the Canadian Pharmaceutical Association. A pharmacist by training, she is responsible for identifying professional practice issues and developing programs for CPA members. Before joining the CPA, she served as coordinator for the Ottawa Valley Regional Drug Information Service, Coordinator of Clinical Pharmacy Services at the Ottawa General Hospital and edited the French edition of the Compendium of Pharmaceuticals and Specialities.

Cam Cathcart's broadcasting career spans 30 years, mainly as a reporter with a brief administrative intermission at CBC network headquarters. During these years, he has covered the news from coast to coast in Canada, on assignment in exotic cold spots such as the USSR and less exotic hot spots like Washington at the end of the Nixon presidency. Two years ago, Mr. Cathcart joined the Vancouver-based CBC network TV program for seniors, The Best Years, as co-host and reporter.

Ross Chapman is a distinguished teacher and researcher who has acted as a consultant to international and governmental agencies on food and drug control since 1974. He spent 25 years with Health and Welfare Canada in many positions of senior responsibility, including that of Assistant Deputy Minister, Food and Drugs, and Director-general, International Health Services. He has headed numerous Canadian delegations to international committees and conferences concerning food and drugs, including the Canadian delegation to the United Nations Commission on Narcotics Drugs Special Sessions in 1970. In 1974-

75, he acted as consultant to the World Health Organization in Geneva. Dr. Chapman is author of over 30 scientific publications.

After working 45 years in the retail food industry as a butcher, ***William "Bill" Corns*** is now an outspoken advocate for seniors' rights. He is a recipient of the Ontario Bicentennial Medal and has been a Board member of **One Voice**, The Canadian Seniors Network.

...ontent labelling on packaging must take into consideration that some people's eyesight is poor, and that others have difficulty reading complex texts."

Bill Corns, Toronto, ON

For the last 34 years, ***Judy Creighton*** has worked in the Canadian print media in Victoria, London and Toronto, 10 of those years as Lifestyles Editor for The Canadian Press. Since 1986, she has worked as a columnist for Canadian Press, writing two weekly columns on food and nutrition, and aging. She was the recipient of the Western Ontario Newspaper Award for feature writing and has been affiliated with such nonprofit concerns as the Ontario Cancer Research Foundation and Nellie's Hostel for Battered Women in Toronto.

Hélène Dallaire is a professor at the University of Ottawa Faculty of Health Sciences. She has worked extensively in the field of gerontology research, including the socio-pyschological aspects of aging, the impact of retirement, and illiteracy, especially as it pertains to seniors, women and francophones.

A research biochemist and clinical nutritionist, ***Dr. Kappu Desai*** has over 25 years experience in teaching, researching and counselling. She is a member of many advisory committees and boards, including the Ontario Advisory Council on Multiculturalism and the National Advisory Council on Aging. Dr. Desai is active in community causes and social services, and is a strong advocate for nutritionally vulnerable groups, including the poor and seniors.

Anne Desrocher-Black is a teacher at The Learning Centre. She has 16 years experience in education, including regular classes, French-language immersion courses, French as a second language, as well as literacy training. Her teaching experience has included students of every age. Ms Desrochers-Black was 'bitten by the computer bug' when she managed her own business, and the interest has kept her busy for the last 12 years.

Raymond Fynes is Vice-president of Scientific Affairs of Astra Pharma Inc., a Canadian subsidiary of the multinational Swedish pharmaceutical company, AB Astra. He has worked with Astra since 1972, supervising the process which brings new pharmaceuticals to the Canadian market. Dr. Fynes was instrumental in the founding of the Canadian Hypertension Society, an organization that includes all medical professions involved in hyperten-

sion research. He has a special interest in elderly people and their medication, and represented the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association of Canada on the Canadian Coalition on Medical Use and the Elderly.

"Older people haven't 'lost it' intellectually. What actually declines is the speed at which an older person can absorb new materials. Just give them a little more time."

Ross Chapman, Ottawa, ON

After 15 years as a secondary school teacher and 6 years as assistant pastor, ***Sister Claire Jobin*** has found her niche. It's in a remote corner of the Winnipeg School Division I, called White Flower House. There, Sr. Jobin teaches 35 to 40 students, mostly immigrants, many seniors, how to speak and read English. She is also manager of the Sisters of the Holy Names, a Roman Catholic teaching order.

Stan Jones is an associate professor of Linguistics at Carleton University in Ottawa, and Director of the Centre for the Study of Adult Literacy there. He is also Director of the Summer Institute for Literacy Practitioners at Carleton. His work in adult literacy has principally concentrated on assessment. Currently Stan Jones is a consultant to Statistics Canada for the design and analysis of its national literacy survey.

Noël Kinsella was appointed Associate Under Secretary of State in October 1988. The National Literacy Secretariat is one of his responsibilities. A native of New Brunswick, he taught at St. Thomas University in Fredericton from 1965 to 1988, where he helped develop the university's programs in native studies, social work and gerontology. Dr. Kinsella is also a licensed member of the College of Psychologists of New Brunswick.

Much of his life work has been dedicated to the advancement of human rights. He has been a member of Canadian delegations to United Nations commissions and conferences on human rights and in 1985 was a founding member of the International Academy of Human Rights in Madrid.

Educated "in the school of life", ***Florian Levesque*** has been a journalist/researcher for Radio-Canada, a tourist guide, historian, analyst, poet... He is now coordinator of the umbrella literacy organization Regroupement des groupes francophones d'alphabétisation populaire de l'Ontario. The group seeks to develop a collective consciousness among Franco-Ontarians with respect to language, and to protect the interests of members of this community who have low literacy.

Leslie Limage is a program specialist with the International Literacy Year Secretariat of UNESCO. She has been involved in literacy-related issues in both developing and industrialized countries for nearly 20 years. Her doctoral dissertations for both the University of Paris and the University of London Institute of Education were concerned with literacy policy practice in

both groups of countries. Ms Limage has been teacher, adult education tutor and organizer, university lecturer, researcher and international organization consultant. She was involved in the British literacy campaign in 1975, has advised the French government on adult literacy issues and has written extensively on many aspects of literacy, including mother tongue literacy, migrant and minority education, the role of adult literacy in industrialized countries, and the special literacy needs of girls and women.

Patti Martineau brings a western perspective on adult literacy. Educated at the University of Calgary, she has worked as a secondary school teacher, as a coordinator of continuing education and as a program director. Now, as Assistant Director of Community Education at Medicine Hat College, Ms Martineau is responsible for education and training programs, especially those directed to seniors and youth. It is her job to ensure that these programs respond to the needs of both urban and rural communities.

Gilles Morin was appointed Minister Without Portfolio Responsible for Senior Citizens Affairs in the Ontario Government in 1989. Mr. Morin was a captain in the Canadian Armed Forces, and served in Korea with the Royal 22nd Regiment. He later served as aide-de-camp to Governors-General Vincent Massey and Georges Vanier. Following a 17-year career as an investment counsellor, Mr. Morin was recruited by Arthur Maloney to act as Director of Regional Services for the Office of the Ombudsman. He was first elected to the Ontario Legislature in the riding of Carleton East in 1985.

Elizabeth Nielsen is a scientific project officer with the Product Safety Branch of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada. She received her MSc in Textile Science from the University of Guelph, and her PhD in chemical and material sciences from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland. Prior to joining the Product Safety Branch, Dr. Nielsen taught at the University of Guelph and carried out research into the combustion properties of textiles.

Gordon Nore has been involved in adult education for 10 years. For the past two years, he has been with Frontier College. Before that he taught English as a second language, adult basic education, business and academic writing at George Brown, Seneca and Humber Colleges, the York University English Institute and the School of Continuing Studies at the University of Toronto. He is an editorial board member of Starting Out, a provincially funded newspaper for adult new readers and their tutors in Ontario, and an education consultant to the Literacy and Health Project of the Ontario Public Health Association.

Though she began her education at the University of Saskatchewan, ***Dianne Norton*** crossed the ocean for a Master of Arts at the London School of Economics and University of London. She stayed in

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or too long, we have been in a situation where education was something that was done to you."

ROBERT WILLISTON, TORONTO, ON

ell the idea of Elderhostel by promoting it as a holiday."

THÉRÈSE LAJOIE-DIXON, MONTRÉAL, PQ

England, where she wears three hats, working at Age Concern England, at the University of the Third Age, and at the International Council of Adult Education. Dianne Norton is author of numerous articles on education and older adults in Britain. She is currently organizing the first conference on Literacy and Older Adults in the United Kingdom.

Susan Nutbrown is coordinator of The Learning Centre, a computer-assisted literacy centre administered by the Ottawa Board of Education. Computers have played a role in 10 of her 17 teaching years. Primarily working in the field of English as a second language, Ms Nutbrown has taught adults in a variety of settings in Québec, British Columbia and Ontario. She is co-author of Connecting a textbook for teaching English as a second language.

Walter Pitman has been steeped in education all his life. Prior to becoming the Director of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education in 1987, he was Executive Director of the Ontario Arts Council, President of Ryerson and a dean at Trent University. He began his career as a secondary school teacher and was dedicated to the pursuit of lifelong education "long before it was fashionable".

His community involvement reflects this dedication. He is, at present, chairman of the board of Elderhostel Canada, and a member of the international Elderhostel board. He is also chairman of Energy Probe and Energy Probe International. He was a founder and is a member of the steering committee of the Friends of Public Broadcasting.

Walter Pitman has served both as a Member of Parliament and of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. He is the recipient of many awards and honours for his contributions to Canada and to education.

Beginning as a high school principal and special education teacher, ***Philip Rose*** has spent the last five years at Laubach Literacy Action, which is part of the volunteer adult literacy network in the United States. He manages a $500,000 program for the Retired Senior Volunteer Program to develop senior volunteers in literacy in the United States.

Beverly Webb's academic background in education and health is now applied in her work as Public Safety Manager for the Canada Safety Council. At the Safety Council, she is responsible for the magazine Living Safety and other issues such as child safety, seniors' safety, recreational safety and safety in the home.

From his start at the University of Guelph as an undergraduate all the way to post-doctoral studies at Harvard Massachusetts, ***Robert Williston*** has been immersed in continuing education. He was director of continuing education at institutions in New Brunswick, Alberta and Ontario. He is now executive director of Elderhostel Canada.

C Conference Participants

APPENDIX

Andrew Aitkens, Ottawa, ON
Joel Aldred, Ottawa, ON
Helen Appleton, Medicine Hat, AB
Agno Arsenault, Summerville, PE
Ruth Baldwin, Ottawa, ON
Mary Ballantyne, Kingston, ON
Francine Beauregard, Ottawa, ON
Ruth Bellan, Winnipeg, MB
Graham Berry, Owen Sound, ON
Anne Desrochers-Black, Ottawa, ON
Eva Bonniface, Sudbury, ON
Edna Bourque, Moncton, NB
Margery Boyce, Hull, PQ
Esther Braden, Yellowknife, NT
Hélène Brisson, Gatineau, PQ
Rhéal Brisson, Embrun, ON
Francine Brunet Bérubé, Ottawa, ON
Maria Buranello, Toronto, ON
Judy Cairns, Darmouth, NS
Brenda Caldwell, Ottawa, ON
Murray Cardiff,
Patricia Carruthers-Czyzewski, Ottawa, ON
Cam Cathcart, Vancouver, BC
Thelma Chalifoux, Edmonton, AB
Ross Chapman, Ottawa, ON
Yolande Clément, Sudbury, ON
Bill Corns, Toronto, ON
Judy Creighton, Toronto, ON
Bert Curtis, Almonte, ON

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f we could delete the word education and use learning, we would be further ahead. The bulk of learning happens outside formal education."

Bert Curtis, Almonte, ON

Murielle Cutway, Montréal, PQ
Laurent Cyr, Whitehorse, YT
Hélène Dallaire, Ottawa, ON
Simone Daoust, Hawkesbury, ON
René David, Lachute, PQ
Elizabeth J. Davis, Ottawa, ON
Liette Deault, Gatineau, ON
Sylvie Deliencourt, Ottawa, ON
Kappu Desai, Ottawa, ON
Richard Dicerni, Ottawa, ON
Elizabeth Donaldson, Ottawa, ON
Reta Duernish-Turner, Toronto, ON
John Duffy, Bathurst, NB
Pearl Duffy, Bathurst, NB
Jackie Easby, Ottawa, ON
Doris Evan, Darmouth, NS
Ron Eveleith, Vancouver, BC
Ferdie Ewald, Regina, SK
Christina Fiedorowicz, Ottawa, ON
Harry Fields, Willowdale, ON
Susan Fletcher, Ottawa, ON
Nicole Fortin-Grenon, Elliot Lake, ON
Gwynneth Foster, Palmer Rapids, ON
Marion Fuller, Ottawa, ON
Ray Fynes, Mississauga, ON
Shawna Gnotel, Toronto, ON
Yhetta Gold, Winnipeg, MB
Cecil Gordon, Lethbridge, AB
Larry Gray, Ottawa, ON
Sam Haggerty, Regina, SK
Ivan Hale, Ottawa, ON
Jacqueline Hammond, Nepean, ON
Signy Hansen, Ottawa, ON
Leonard Harrison, Willowdale, ON
Earle Hawkesworth, Edmonton, AB
Doris Hayes, Gloucester, ON
John Hobday, Montréal, PQ
Doris House, St. John's, NF
Harold House, St. John's, NF
Tamara Ilersich, London, ON
Ruth Ilieff, Montréal, PQ
Catherine M. Janes, Grand Falls, NF

eassurance that you were not admitting failure if you signed up for help was thought to be the cornerstone of the program's success."

Stan Jones, Ottawa, ON

Claire Jobin, Winnipeg, MB
Frederick Johnstone, Ottawa, ON
Stan Jones, Ottawa, ON
Noel Kinsella, Hull, PQ
Kay Knobel, Ottawa, ON
Beverley Knott, Pembroke, ON
Elizabeth E. Kusey, Ottawa, ON
Jean Labelle, Cornwall, ON
Thérèse Lajoie-Dixon, Montréal, PQ
Claude Langevin, Québec, PQ
Chris Lawrence, Edmonton, AB
Albini Léger, Caraquet, NB
Florian Levesque, Toronto, ON
Claire Levesque-Clarke, Ottawa, ON
Leslie Limage, Paris, France
Karen H. Lindstrom, Calgary, AB
Erica Loevenmark, Pembroke, ON
Catherine Luke, Toronto, ON
Dorothy MacKinnon, Toronto, ON
Patti Martineau, Medicine Hat, AB
Nancy Matschke, Eganville, ON
Anna McCarthy, Cambridge, ON
Christine Mercer, Nepean, ON
Hugh Millar, Vancouver, BC
Dusty Miller, Yellowknife, NT
Mrs. Miller, Yellowknife, NT
Irma Milnes, Toronto, ON
Monnie Moores, Grand Falls, NF
Pierre Moreau, Cornwall, ON
Peter Morrison, Ponoka, AB
Anne Moss, Montréal, PQ
Brad Munro, Ottawa, ON
Angèle Murphy, Embrun, ON
Charlotte Murray, Vancouver, BC
Sandra Murray, Ottawa, ON
Elizabeth B. Nielsen, Hull, PQ
Jayne Nicki, Fredericton, NB
Gordon Nore, Toronto, ON
Dianne Norton, London, England
Susan Nutbrown, Ottawa, ON
Stella Oliwa, Gloucester, ON
Pat Olsen, Whitehorse, YT
Doug Orchard, Owen Sound, ON
Allan Parks, Miscouche, PE
Melvin Perry, Summerside, PE
Walter G. Pitman, Toronto, ON
Claude Plouffe, Gatineau, PQ
Brent Poulton, Toronto, ON
William Poy, Don Mills, ON
Ed Ralph, Don Mills, ON
John L. Rankin, Hamiota, MB
Marg Raynard, Toronto, ON
John Restakis, Toronto, ON
Bernard Richard, Moncton, NB
Gisèle Richard, Cornwall, ON

he Adult Literacy Skills Catalogue (ALSCAT) is available from the Learning Centre in Ottawa. This is a list of what people might want to read. Use this to give to people in programs to think about what they might want to learn."

Stan Jones, Ottawa, ON

Carol Robertson, Winnipeg, MB
Ruth Robson, Toronto, ON
Suzanne Rochon, Rockland, ON
Philip Rose, Syracuse, NY
Guy Routhier, Orléans, ON
Elizabeth Rowberry, Cowansville, PQ
Jane Rutherford, Ottawa, ON
Normand Savoie, Welland, ON
Charlie Scambler, Edmonton, AB
Paul Scambler, Victoria, BC
Judy Schauer, Pembroke, ON
Lucie Servant, Embrun, ON
Wendy Seys, Bedford, PQ
Kyoshi Shimizu, Victoria, BC
Dolly Smith, Smiths Falls, ON
Nicole Snaauw, Aylmer, ON
Arthur St Amour, Embrun, ON
Tony A. Stacey, West Hill, ON
Laurel Tasker, Toronto, ON
Michèle Tessier, St-Eustache, PQ
John Tourangeau, Ottawa, ON
Megan Wardrop, Ottawa, ON
Beverly Webb, Ottawa, ON
Donald Whalen, Douglastown, NB
Marie Whalen, Douglastown, NB
Mary Alice White, Toronto, ON
Bonnie Williamson, Grande Prairie, AB
Robert Williston, Toronto, ON
Lorraine Wiltse, Penticton, BC

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meeting of older persons is more than an exchange; the sum of all the minds produces more than the total of the parts."

Kappu Desai, Toronto, ON